

Water Quality Protection Division



Mississippi Canyon 252 Oil Spill, Gulf of Mexico Region 6 Update

Subject: **Water Quality Division Update # 43**
 Mississippi Canyon 252 Oil Spill, Gulf of Mexico

Date: June 30, 2010

Reporting Period: June 29, 2010 1300 – June 30, 2010 1300

HIGHLIGHTS

Regional weather patterns are hampering shoreline protection and sampling efforts.

CONTINUING ISSUES

Forecast

The nearshore oil forecast created by NOAA on 6/29/10 at 2100 CDT for 6/30/10 at 1200 CDT (Figure 1) indicates that the main part of the oil slick will be east of Louisiana with a portion of the slick south of the Delta extending westward. Winds are forecast to be 12-22 knots from the southeast, south and southwest through Friday. Shoreline impacts may occur on the barrier islands of Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida Panhandle as far east as Freeport, FL. With the sustained SE winds, oiled shoreline impacts also threaten Breton Sound, the Chandeleur Islands and the Mississippi Delta. The strong southeast winds may bring oil ashore between Barataria and Cailou Bay and a strong westward current that is developing may carry the oil to the west faster.

- For maps concerning shoreline impact assessments, oil slick forecasts, and sampling locations go to <http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com/go/doctype/2931/53979/>

Monitoring and Assessment

- Continuing to coordinate with HQ, Region 4, and the REOC Environmental Unit regarding planning activities, permitting, drinking water, and daily review of monitoring data.

Drinking Water

- Drinking water intakes, public drinking water wells, and domestic wells have not been impacted by the oil sheen to date.
- EPA Region 6 continues to coordinate closely with the LDHH on all drinking water issues.

Data Management – Mapping Efforts

- Updated the Shoreline Coastal Assessment Team (SCAT) and the oiled CWPPRA projects maps.

NPDES

- Participating in discussions with OW and R4 on options for modification of existing oil and gas general permits in the Gulf of Mexico.

Coastal Programs

Louisiana Large-Scale Coastal Barrier Plan:

- Work on both the eastern and western stretches of the berms has ceased and dredges are sheltering throughout the next day or two, depending on wave and surge effects from Tropical Storm Alex.
- In addition to the construction of a subsurface equipment platform, roughly 1100-1200 linear feet of dredged material have been placed on the eastern portion of the project, in the Chandeleur Island reach. Work has not begun on shaping it into the final design specifications. Backfilling operations on borrow site 6A, which was subject to high level agency discussions last week, are expected to be completed within the next three weeks. Concerns over this action related to the potential for adverse impacts to normal littoral processes.
- Oil, in the form of coin-sized patties, has been photographed on the outer side, or Gulf side, of the Chandeleur stretch of the berm. Prior to construction, oil was documented on the sound-side of the island chain. No oil on the berm will be covered over by construction work and further work on contaminated reaches will be done under the direction of the Coast Guard.
- All sediment samples taken to date from borrow sites and rehandling areas have tested negative for the presence of hydrocarbons.
- The State expects to submit to the Corps the full permit application package and monitoring plan tomorrow, July 1st. Additional discussions on environmental resource issues will follow with regard to pre-construction geotechnical surveys, bird nesting surveys, turtle exclusion and relocation plans, impacts to the Pelican Island CWPPRA project, and ramifications for maintenance dredging at other major navigation channels.

Corps Emergency Authorizations for Coastal Protection Features:

- No new requests for emergency authorizations have been received.

OW Ecological Impact Analyses:

- The Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium released the 2010 forecast of the summer hypoxic zone for the northern Gulf of Mexico, predicting that it will cover from 19,141 to 21,941 km² (avg. 20,140 km²) of the bottom of the continental shelf off Louisiana and Texas. If the predictions hold true, it will be the fifth largest hypoxic occurrence since systematic mapping began in 1985. As reported, the effects of the oil spill in relation to the hypoxic zone are undefined, but potentially significant.

Corps Navigation Maintenance Dredging:

- Discussions continue with the Corps regarding dredged material disposal in the lower Mississippi River in light of reports of surface sheen and tar balls in the area designated by EPA for ocean disposal of dredged material (ODMDS). The hopper dredges have been moved up river of the ODMDS, are not currently utilizing the ODMDS, and are temporarily disposing at the Head of Passes Disposal Site (HPDS). The HPDS is also a borrow site for the LA sand berm project, which might result in opening additional capacity for lower Mississippi River maintenance dredging disposal.
- Discussions continue internally and with the Corps (headquarters, Districts, and MV Division) on the EPA (R6, R4, OCPD) discussion paper on ocean dumping suitability issues in areas impacted by the oil spill.
- Work on the LA sand berm has resulted in dredges being pulled off the Galveston navigation channel maintenance project but the dredge working on the Calcasieu project has not been re-assigned and is not being factored into the current berm construction plan.

Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA)

- It is anticipated that there may be re-oiling of several shorelines in the vicinity of CWPPRA projects located in the Barataria and Terrebonne basin